

## Review of the Committee Structure

Many thanks to those who have provided feedback on the recently published paper entitled 'Governance Review'.

It was a challenge putting down on paper what was actually a series of complex discussions. How successful the paper was in communicating those ideas is open to debate! However, the feedback received does suggest that the Board needs to clarify a number of issues.

- A former Treasurer of British Orienteering, John Morris, has pointed out that the title of the paper is misleading. The *legal* governance structure of British Orienteering is the General Meetings, including the AGM, which are the prime decision-making authority, followed by the Board, which has authority for the remaining decision making. The Board is able to delegate authority to other individuals, committees and groups, but remains responsible for the decisions made. In this context the Board is not seeking to review the legal governance of British Orienteering, and the paper could therefore perhaps have been more appropriately titled 'British Orienteering Committee Review'.
- This review is completely separate from the update of the Memorandum & Articles of Association which was introduced at the 2011 AGM and which, following a wide consultation later in 2011, will be placed before members at the 2012 AGM. The current review of Events Committee and the wider committee structure will not in any way alter the Articles of Association or the legal governance of British Orienteering.
- The Directors who make up the Board are directly elected by the membership at the AGM, and consequently the current Directors represent a range of different viewpoints. However, the Board is aware of the importance of having a diverse group of Directors, who between them can reflect the views of a broad cross-section of members. For instance, to improve geographic diversity, the Board have in the past approached other parties, such as SOA, to encourage them to consider nominating a person to become a Director. The matter of Board diversity is an issue which needs further consideration at a later date. Each year the Directors conduct an audit of the Board's overall skill set. This is published on the website, and highlights which skills are potentially lacking and seeks to encourage members with those skills to put themselves forward for election. This process will continue.
- The Board is committed to improving its own performance through a cycle of reflection, review and change. To this end, the Board is currently engaged in an exercise to review its own effectiveness. This exercise has included seeking the views of the people that the Board interacts with, including current committee and group members. This process of reflection and review is important to the continued improvement of the Board's effectiveness. The Board believe the membership of British Orienteering deserve both an effective Board and a Board which can be shown to be following good practice.

To address some of the specific issues raised in the feedback received to date:

- a) Whilst the paper made some concrete proposals for changes that the Board are considering, it was nonetheless a consultation paper. The paper has been circulated to all Association and Club Secretaries, all members of current Committees and Groups, published on the web site, and referred to in a two-page article in Focus, and any feedback is sought and welcomed via [feedback@britishorienteering.org.uk](mailto:feedback@britishorienteering.org.uk).
- b) The Board believes that democracy is vital, particularly in a membership organisation such as British Orienteering, and is certainly not trying to reduce the input of the members into the

decision-making process. In fact, the Board is concerned that views are not being expressed effectively (and, in particular, early enough) through the current structure, and would like to see the balance between democracy and decision-making working more effectively. For example, some association representatives rarely attend meetings, while others do attend but sometimes present their own personal view rather than a view reached by consultation with members, clubs and their association. And whilst association-appointed representatives do in theory ensure a wide geographical spread of representation, it is equally important that British Orienteering groups and committees should aim to be representative across other aspects of the membership, such as age, gender and experience, and that (where appropriate) they have the appropriate specialist skills and knowledge to function effectively.

- c) The Board do wish to see a diversity of opinion being expressed as part of the decision-making process. At the same time, however, effective operation requires that the individuals involved in that decision-making process be willing to accept that their view may not be the only view, and indeed may not be the principal view. There will always be a need to balance differing views, but once a final decision has been made it is vital that the individuals involved in making that decision accept the outcome, at least until it can be appropriately reviewed.
- d) In hindsight, the paper links three matters which could be separated:
  - Improving the functioning of Events Committee as quickly as possible;
  - Addressing the wider matter of the terms of reference and membership of the committees, and what support they may need;
  - Determining how effective communication between the Board, committees, groups, associations, clubs and members can best be delivered.
- e) Events Committee is currently composed of the chairs of various groups (Fixtures, Rules, Map, Major Events, Junior/Elite/Senior Competitions), and has no association representation. For many of the reasons described in the paper it is not functioning effectively, and it is the Board's responsibility to resolve this. The Board is committed to addressing this by:
  - Agreeing revised terms of reference for the new Events & Competitions Committee;
  - Agreeing person and skills specifications for the Chair and members of the new Committee;
  - Agreeing a transparent appointments process for the Chair and members of the new Committee;
  - Determining an Appointments Panel for the Chair, which may be composed of a Director, an individual able to represent the views of the associations, clubs or members, and an independent person who can ensure good process is followed;
  - Improving the communication and reporting structure between the Board, the new Committee, and any supporting groups which may be formed.

As a result of the feedback received so far, the Board have decided to await the discussion at the Association & Club Conference before forming the membership of the new Events & Competitions Committee.

Once formed, the new Committee will be asked to make recommendations about the supporting groups they need in order to delegate work. Until those supporting groups have been identified, terms of reference drawn up, and the members appointed, the current groups will continue to operate. It should also be made clear that groups such as Fixtures may work most effectively with a membership composed of association representatives; however, such issues must be discussed by the new E&C Committee before a decision is made.

- f) The Board is of the opinion that an Association & Club Conference is necessary in order for the Board to carry out consultation which will inform its strategic decision making. A separate communication has been issued to invite representatives to a conference on 15 October 2011. Whilst the Board has matters it would like to place on this agenda, the associations and clubs will also have the opportunity to raise matters they wish to be included. Discussion of committee membership will be on the agenda for the Conference.
- g) A communications plan needs to be discussed and agreed to determine how items will be communicated between the members, clubs, associations, the various committees and the Board of British Orienteering. This plan will require wide consultation, and the Board will welcome any suggestions that people might have.

#### **British Orienteering Committee Review: Revised Timetable**

	Revised dates
Board to agree the model and begin consultation with the Events Committee and Groups	May 2011
Agenda and papers distributed for the first Association & Club Conference to be held in autumn 2011	Jun 2011
The Board recruits and appoints a person to chair the Events & Competitions Committee adhering to the 'Recruitment & Selection Policy' of British Orienteering	Sept 2011
<b>Association &amp; Club Conference</b>	<b>15 Oct 2011</b>
A small group of directors will meet with the appointed chair as part of the induction process to ensure there is understanding of the terms of reference for the committee, the role of the chair and the lines of communication between the Board and committee	Nov 2011
Board uses the 'Recruitment & Selection Policy' of British Orienteering to appoint new Events & Competitions Committee members	Jan 2012
First meeting of the new Events & Competitions Committee; induction followed by discussion on the groups that may be required to support the work of the committee, followed by recommendations being made to the Board	Feb/Mar 2012
Board consider proposed support structure for Events & Competition Committee	Apr 2012
Appointment process to fill the membership of any new established groups	May 2012
Current groups cease operation	Jun 2012
Board consider other committee areas and terms of reference. Consult on any suggested modifications	Jun 2012
Board meets with Events & Competitions Committee and any support groups	Jul 2012
<b>Association and Club Conference</b>	<b>Oct 2012</b>
Board agree any further changes to the committee structure	Dec 2012